



## Franking Equipment Operational Requirements

When using Franking Equipment, in addition to complying with the requirements of the Royal Mail Scheme for Franking Letters and Parcels 2017 (the **Scheme**), Users shall comply with the following Operational Requirements, to the extent applicable to model of Franking Equipment. Royal Mail may update the Operational Requirements from time to time and will publish changes at [www.royalmail.com/franking](http://www.royalmail.com/franking).

### **1. Definitions of expressions used in these Operational Requirements**

In these Operational Requirements, the following expressions have the following meanings, unless the context in which the expressions appear indicates otherwise.

**Authorised Manufacturer** – a person who has Royal Mail's approval to manufacture Franking Equipment.

**Data Centre** – the data centre of an Authorised Manufacturer to which Royal Mail Mailmark® Franking Equipment supplied by that Authorised Manufacturer must be connected to upload usage data.

**Dies and/or Devices** – the component or components of the Franking Equipment which prints, or controls the printing of the Franking Mark.

**Franking Equipment** – any piece of equipment which may be used to indicate and record payment of Postage and/or Fees on Letters, including but not limited to machines, computers, computer peripherals, security devices, software, printers and telecommunications links and including any system used to Reset such equipment.

**Franking Mark** – any mark or impression printed or otherwise made by Franking Equipment indicating the date and place of posting, the Postage and Fees paid or payable, the identity of the Franking Equipment used and any other numbers, words, characters, barcodes, symbols or marks required by Royal Mail.

**Late Posting Envelope** – an envelope in a format approved by Royal Mail, obtainable from Authorised Manufacturers enabling customers to post franked mail after the last collection as provided for in paragraph 2.7.5.

**Letter** – any postal packet (including letters and parcels) except a packet consisting of articles for the blind, a current registered newspaper, an un-addressed packet or packet consisting of a petition or address of a kind referred to in Section 84 (1) of the Post Offices Act 1969, or Section 100(1) to (3) of the Postal Services Act 2000.

**Low Volume Envelope** – an envelope in a format approved by Royal Mail, obtainable from Authorised Manufacturers enabling customers of low volume franking machines (models specified and approved by Royal Mail) to post their mail as provided for in paragraph 2.7.4.

**Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment** – Franking Equipment which produces a Franking Mark that includes a Royal Mail Mailmark indicia.

**Meter/Postal Security Device** – the part of the Franking Equipment that records usage.

**Postage and Fees** – postage is the fee charged by Royal Mail for delivery of a Letter. Fees are the sums Royal Mail charges to provide other services. When postage and fees are subjected to VAT, they are expressed as VAT-inclusive, unless stated to the contrary.

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**Registers** – instruments within the Meter of the Franking Equipment which record the amount of Postage paid and the amount of credit remaining available for use.

**Reset** – to charge Franking Equipment with credit for payment of Postage and/ or Fees. The term resetting should be construed accordingly.

**Royal Mail Franking Administration Centre** – the Royal Mail administration centre at which records are kept of the User's Franking Equipment.

**User** – any person who uses or intends to use Franking Equipment to pay Postage and/or Fees on Letters to be posted in the UK.

## **2. Operational Requirements**

### **Franking Machine Security**

- 2.1 The seals on Franking Equipment must not be broken and must not be duplicated.
- 2.2 If a seal is broken, the User must report it to the Royal Mail Franking Administration Centre immediately.
- 2.3 The Meter readings (as recorded on the Meter's Registers) must always show the correct amount of Postage and Fees that the User has prepaid and/or used. The Franking Equipment must not be tampered with in any way, in particular, in any way so as to alter the Meter readings.
- 2.4 The Franking Mark produced by the Die and Device within the Franking Equipment must always show the same value as the amount by which the Registers change when the Franking Mark is produced.

### **Posting Franked Letters**

- 2.5 Franked Letters may only be posted in the area designated by the Franking Mark, unless otherwise permitted by Royal Mail.
- 2.6 Franked Letters must be posted on the date shown in the Franking Mark.
- 2.7 Franked Letters must be presented for posting in trays, bags, pouches and envelopes of a type specified by Royal Mail, according to the following requirements:
  - 2.7.1 in trays, segregated by class and service, facing and orientated the same way. These may be posted by depositing at a designated Royal Mail office (or where this has been arranged and any collection Fees due to Royal Mail is paid) by being collected by Royal Mail, or an agent authorised to act on Royal Mail's behalf; or
  - 2.7.2 in bags (each labelled with the class and service paid for), segregated by class and service, in bundles of Letters facing and orientated the same way. These may be posted by depositing at a designated post office or Royal Mail office, (or where this has been arranged and any fee due to Royal Mail is paid) by being collected by Royal Mail, or an agent authorised to act on Royal Mail's behalf; or

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- 2.7.3 in pouches, segregated by class and service, in bundles of Letters facing and orientated the same way. These may be posted by depositing at a designated post office or Royal Mail office, in a Business Posting Box (or where this has been arranged and any fee due to Royal Mail is paid) by being collected by a Post Office employee, or agent authorised to act on Royal Mail's behalf; or
- 2.7.4 in Low Volume Posting Envelopes (a maximum of two per day) and each such envelope must be clearly marked on the outside as such, and;
  - 2.7.4.1 sealed so it does not disgorge its contents;
  - 2.7.4.2 be of a size so it does not interfere with the processing of other mail, and;
  - 2.7.4.3 contain no more than 30 Letters; or
- 2.7.5 In Late Posting Envelopes (a maximum of one per day) posted after the last collection from the User for that day and where possible letters should be impressed with the following day's date and may be posted in any post box.
- 2.8 Variations to these requirements for presenting and posting Franked Letters may be authorised at Royal Mail's discretion and may be included in these Operational Requirements.
- 2.9 Letters that Royal Mail are unable to deliver may be destroyed if they do not bear a return address within the United Kingdom.

## **Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment**

- 2.10 Users must ensure that, in relation to Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment:
  - 2.10.1 where DL and C5/4 sized envelopes are used, such envelopes must be white. where non white DL and C5/4 envelopes are used, once existing stocks have been used, customers using franking machines with Mailmark franking technology must use white envelopes. The quality of brown manila envelopes or dark (black or grey) wrappings, means the Mailmark indicia and barcode does not always print clearly which will result in our automation not being able to read the mail and could result in a delay to your mail;
  - 2.10.2 where the User's Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment is used to produce a low volume of Franking Marks (as determined by Royal Mail and notified to the User by Royal Mail or the relevant Authorised Manufacturer), the Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment is connected to the relevant Authorised Manufacturer's Data Centre at least once every 7 days to upload usage data (with a grace period of 3 days i.e. the User may be allowed up to 10 days between connections to the Data Centre);
  - 2.10.3 where the User's Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment is used to produce a high volume of Franking Marks (as determined by Royal Mail and notified to the User by Royal Mail or the relevant Authorised Manufacturer), the Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment is connected to the relevant Authorised Manufacturer's Data Centre before 9pm on every working day on which the Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment has produced Franking Marks, to upload usage data.

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- 2.11 Connections to the Data Centre must be made using a secure method approved of by Royal Mail. If a User fails to connect their Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment to the Data Centre and upload usage data in accordance with paragraph 2.10.2 or 2.10.3, as appropriate, the Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment will stop operating until a connection to the Data Centre and the upload of usage data occurs.
- 2.12 A weigh scale/platform must be linked or integrated to the Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment.
- 2.13 From the 10th November 2014, where Royal Mail Mailmark Franking Equipment is used by Users to frank international Letters in respect of which the Fees are underpaid or are paid for as UK domestic Letters, Royal Mail will charge Users the Fee for the weight band 21g-60g for each such Letter (less the UK domestic Fee or Postage that the User has already paid). The £2 underpayment Fee for underpaid franked Letters will be added to this revised Fee.
- 2.14 From 30th March 2015, the administration (surcharge) fee for underpaid Mailmark franked mail items will reduce. Mailmark franking customers will still be required to pay the underpaid amount plus the now reduced administration (surcharge) fee. For more information go to [www.royalmail.com/franking](http://www.royalmail.com/franking).
- 2.15 From 30th March 2015, customers will only be contacted about underpayments when the total is greater than £10 in any week. Where the underpaid amount plus the administration (surcharge) is less than £10 we'll consolidate this with any other underpaid amounts that arise within a 30 day period. Customers will be contacted by letter if total underpayments exceed £10 or in any event at the end of the 30 day period. Our letter will state the amount underpaid and the administrative (surcharge) fee to create a combined total. This amount must be paid to Royal Mail within 30 days.